THRILLING TALES OF HORROR & SUSPENSE

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NO. 9

EERIE ADVENTURES

WITCH'S FEAST AT DAWN
TERROR OF THE VOODOO GHOULS

WEBCOMIC UNIVERSE.COM

WITCHES FEAST AT DAWN

THIS MUST BE THE WITCH! THANK GOD IT'S NOT MY MOTHER!

ARRRRGH....

THERE'S GINA. IS THAT HER MOTHER, OLD NANCE?

LET'S WAIT AND SEE. THEY MAY BE WORKING TOGETHER.

R C Hollingsworth

IN THE FAINT LIGHT BEFORE DAWN WHEN THE WITCHES ARE WONT TO COME, A YOUNG GIRL COMES TO A GRAVEYARD SEEKING HER MOTHER. CAN THIS HORRIBLE CREATURE COMING TOWARD HER BE HER MOTHER, THE PERSON THE VILLAGERS CALL OLD NANCE? IRATE VILLAGERS HAVE COME TO FIND OUT THE SAME THING.

FOR SIX MONTHS GRUESOME HAPPENINGS HAD BEEN TAKING PLACE IN BALD TREE CEMETERY. BODIES OF NEWLY-DEAD WERE RIPPED FROM THEIR COFFINS, THEIR FLESH TORN FROM THEIR BONES...

ONLY LAST NIGHT LILY WAS BURIED...

IT'S THE WITCH'S WORK—OLD NANCE! HER HUSBAND DIED SIX MONTHS AGO, THEN IT ALL STARTED.

BALD TREE CEMETERY

BETTER KEEP QUIET ABOUT WITCHES. HERE COMES NANCE'S DAUGHTER, GINA.

IT'S HER MOTHER DID THIS HORRIBLE THING...

LIKE THE OTHER TOWNSFOLK, GINA WAS DRAWN TO THE SCENE OF DESECRATION. HER SWEETHEART, NED RUSHED TO PROTECT HER FROM THE CRUEL GOSSIP.

HOW HORRIBLE! HOW DID IT HAPPEN?

DON'T STAY, GINA. COME HOME, DEAR.

"THAT'S RIGHT. WE DON'T WANT HER AROUND.

DESPITE THE CONSTABLE'S WARNING NOT TO GOSSIP, THE VILLAGERS DISCUSSED THE FRIGHTENING OCCURANCE AT THE CEMETERY.

TRUE IT ALL STARTED WHEN OLD NANCE'S HUSBAND DIED.

SHE MUST BE THE WITCH!

LILY'S SISTER SAID ONCE IN THE CEMETERY, I HEARD NANCE AND WHEN I LOOKED I SAW ONLY A VAMPIRE BAT.

OH, NO!

HOW DARE YOU CALL MY MOTHER A WITCH! YOU FOUL TONGUED...

STOP, GINA! COME AWAY!

DON'T CRY, DAUGHTER. NO USE FIGHTING. COME HOME WITH ME.

BUT, MOTHER, THEY ACCUSE YOU! THEY'RE CALLING YOU A WITCH!

AS GINA DRESSED FOR HER DATE WITH NED THAT NIGHT, SHE WONDERED IF HE WOULD COME HE MIGHT BE INFECTED WITH THOSE AWFUL SUSPICIONS...

MAKE YOURSELF PRETTY FOR NED, DARLING. HE'LL BE HERE SOON.

MAYBE HE WON'T COME...

KN...NOCK.. KNOCK..

SEE, GINA. NED IS HERE ALREADY.

HOW COULD THEY SAY MY MOTHER'S THE WITCH!

I TH-THOUGHT YOU WOULDN'T COME, NED. THOSE STORIES ABOUT MOTHER ....

WHY, DARLING, THEY'RE NONSENSE! I'LL HELP FIND THE MONSTER, AND THEN THEY'LL LEAVE YOU BOTH ALONE.

YES! WE WILL WATCH EVERY NIGHT.

THE FRIGHTENED VILLAGERS FORMED A COMMITTEE TO WATCH AT THE CEMETERY EVERY NIGHT, FOR THE GHOUL.

BUT THE DEADLY SNAKE WAS TOO QUICK FOR NED AND INFLICTED HIS POISONOUS BITE IN A FATAL SPOT.

NO, NO! NED! IT CAN'T BE THAT YOU'RE — DEAD! MY DARLING ....

MOTHER'S SO GENTLE AND SWEET. HOW CAN THEY ACCUSE HER OF SUCH THINGS! WE OUGHT TO MOVE AWAY.

DON'T WORRY, WE'LL GET TO THE BOTTOM OF THIS BUSINESS.

THEN, SUDDENLY, TRAGEDY STRUCK THE TWO LOVERS...

HURRY, NED, IT'S LATE.... NED! LOOK OUT! A RATTLER....!

I'M COM....WHAT? UGH....

AT NED'S FUNERAL THE VILLAGERS WERE FILLED WITH HEAVY FOREBODING.

THE GHOUL DIDN'T SHOW UP ALL WEEK, BUT MAYBE TONIGHT...

THIS IS THE FIRST BURIAL SINCE WE STARTED WATCHING.

WHERE'S OLD NANCE?

WHY ISN'T MOTHER HERE? SHE SAID SHE'D COME!

SUDDENLY THE MOURNERS HEARD A WHIRRING SOUND AND SAW...

A VAMPIRE BAT! IT MUST BE THE WITCH!

MAYBE IT'S OLD NANCE.

AFTER THE BURIAL OF NED, GINA HURRIED HOME

EVERYONE WAS TALKING ABOUT MOTHER'S NOT BEING THERE! COULD IT BE TRUE—WHAT THEY SAY?

MOTHER, WHY WEREN'T YOU AT NED'S FUNERAL?

WITH ALL THE GOSSIP, DAUGHTER, I THOUGHT IT BEST NOT.

AFTER THE FUNERAL, THE VILLAGERS DECIDED TO DOUBLE THE WATCH THAT NIGHT.

THE WITCH WILL BE OUT FOR A FEAST THIS DAWN.

WE'LL BE READY FOR—HER!

HERE'S A GOOD SPOT.

WE CAN HIDE HERE AND WATCH WHAT HAPPENS.

MEANWHILE, OLD NANCE GAVE HER DAUGHTER SOME MOTHERLY ADVICE.

YOU NEED SLEEP AND REST, GINA. GO UPSTAIRS NOW, DEAR.

YOU'RE RIGHT MOTHER

BUT LATER I'M GOING TO JOIN THE WATCHERS AT THE GRAVE!

I'LL SLEEP TILL MIDNIGHT—THEN I'LL GO TO THE CEMETERY...

EXHAUSTED, GINA SLEPT ON. IT WAS ALREADY PAST MIDNIGHT...

OH-I'VE OVERSLEPT! THE CEMETERY-I MUST GO...

WHO'S THAT? CAN IT-BE-

MOTHER'S NOT IN HER ROOM! WHERE CAN SHE BE? IS IT POSSIBLE SHE WENT TO NED'S GRAVE?

THE TERRIBLE SUSPICIONS OF HER MOTHER DROVE GINA WILDLY TOWARD THE CEMETERY.

IT CAN'T BE TRUE THAT MY MOTHER'S THE WITCH! IT CAN'T!

AS THE EVIL LOOKING CREATURE BENT OVER HER, GINA FELT A STRANGE RELIEF, AS WELL AS TERROR.

HELP! HELP!

BUT IT'S NOT MOTHER! OH, THANK GOD!

THE WATCHING VILLAGERS POUNCED ON THE EVIL CREATURE, JUST IN TIME TO SAVE GINA.

AT LAST, WE'VE GOT THE MONSTER.

IT'S FREDDY, THE VILLAGE IDIOT!

WHY DIDN'T WE GUESS BEFORE?

REST IN PEACE

ALL OF US OWE YOU AND YOUR MOTHER AN APOLOGY, GINA.

WE'VE BEEN STUPID. PLEASE FORGIVE US.

LET US TAKE YOU HOME, GINA.

NO MORE WATCHING THE GRAVES. WE'VE GOT THE CULPRIT.

GET SOME REST, GINA. THERE ARE STILL HOURS FOR SLEEP.

THANK YOU.

MOTHER, MOTHER! WHERE ARE YOU? EVERYTHING'S ALL RIGHT NOW.

YES, GINA. HERE I AM.

OH, MOTHER, IT WASN'T A WITCH AT ALL. IT WAS FREDDY, THE IDIOT.

HOW DO YOU KNOW, CHILD?

HE ATTACKED ME, MOTHER. HE ALMOST KILLED ME. BUT—WHERE WERE YOU? YOU LEFT THE HOUSE, MOTHER. WHERE DID YOU GO?

GINA, DEAR, DON'T YOU FEEL ANYTHING— EXCITING—IN THIS EARLY DAWN? DON'T YOU YEARN FOR NED?

GINA BECAME AWARE OF A STRANGE SENSATION, AS THOUGH IN ANSWER TO HER MOTHER'S QUESTION.

WH—WHAT DO YOU MEAN, MOTHER?

YOU ARE OLD ENOUGH NOW TO KNOW THE TRUTH. I *AM* THE WITCH OF THE GRAVES. AND YOU ARE LIKE ME. WHEN WE LOSE OUR MEN WE BECOME WITCHES. COME, IT GROWS LATE.

WHERE-ARE-WE-GOING?

GINA ACHED FOR NED. SHE KNEW NOW SHE WASN'T THE SAME WITHOUT HIM.

FOLLOW ME—WE ARE GOING TO NED. I WILL TEACH YOU MY ART.

I AM COMING, MOTHER!

AS THEY ENTERED THE GRAVEYARD, GINA KNEW FOR CERTAIN THAT SHE WAS LIKE HER MOTHER—A WITCH. THESE STRANGE STIRRINGS WERE EXCITING, THRILLING....

WE MUST HURRY WITH OUR WORK. DAWN IS FADING FAST.

YES—LET US WORK FAST, MOTHER. SOON I WILL BE WITH NED!

SHOW ME, MOTHER, SHOW ME YOUR ART.

HEEE HEEE HEEE. YOU ARE AN EAGER PUPIL, DAUGHTER. YOU WILL LEARN FAST.

NED

THE RACING CAR SPED AROUND THE TRACK AT BREAKNECK SPEED... BUT THE EXCITED CROWD DIDN'T REALIZE THAT *DEATH* WAS AT THE WHEEL! THE SCREECHING TIRES AND ROARING APPLAUSE WERE NOT NORMAL... OF COURSE NOT! BECAUSE...

DEATH was the DRIVER!

John D'Agostino

THIS STORY OF DEATH OPENS A SHORT YEAR AGO, A MIDGET AUTO RACE WAS IN PROGRESS ON A TRACK LOCATED IN THE MIDDLE WEST...

OH, NORM! HE'S WINNING! HE'S WINNING!

HE SURE IS, SIS! OLD NO. 7 IS DOING IT AGAIN!

SHELIA AND NORM NOLAN TEAMED UP WITH JACK LEWIS, HOPING TO WIN THE BIG PURSE OF THE YEAR... AND IT HAD PROVED A SUCCESSFUL ARRANGEMENT FOR ALL...

THIS IS IT, SHELIA! FROM NOW ON IT'S THE BIG TIME FOR US!

CONGRATULATIONS, JACK, DARLING!

YIPEEE!

YES, THE THREE YOUNG PEOPLE HAD PLANS, ALL RIGHT... BIG PLANS...

WITH THE PURSE FROM THIS RACE WE'LL HAVE JUST ENOUGH MONEY FOR A *REAL* CAR!

NO MORE MIDGETS FOR US... NOW WE CAN RACE THE *BIG* BABIES!

ON THE NEXT DAY JACK, NORM AND SHELIA BEGAN THEIR SEARCH FOR A FULL SIZE RACER...

NO, THE ENGINE IS BAD!

NO! THIS CAR WOULDN'T LAST THROUGH FIVE RACES!

NO, I DON'T LIKE THE WHOLE CHASSIS CONSTRUCTION!

IT TOOK A WEEK OF STEADY INSPECTION... AND THEN, AT LAST, IN AN OLD JUNK YARD FOR BROKEN DOWN CARS, THEY FOUND IT!

WHAT A STRANGE PLACE FOR SUCH A BEAUTY!

IT WAS MADE FOR US, JACK!

OH, I HOPE WE HAVE ENOUGH MONEY FOR IT!

WHEN THEY QUESTIONED THE OWNER OF THE JUNK YARD...

THAT CAR? YOU FOLKS DON'T WANT TO BUY THAT CAR! IT'S AN EVIL MONSTER!

WHAT ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT? IT'S A PERFECT PIECE OF MACHINERY!

THE OLD MAN EXPLAINED HIS ATTITUDE BY SAYING...

"FROM THE FIRST DAY THIS CAR WAS RACED, IT CAUSED *DEATH!* AT INDIANA IT CRASHED INTO A GRANDSTAND AND KILLED THE DRIVER ALONG WITH SEVEN SPECTATORS!"

CRASHHH!

"AFTER THE CAR WAS REBUILT IT RACED IN FREEPORT... AND THIS TIME IT CRASHED INTO A FUEL TANK!"

BOOM!

IT'S HAPPENED OVER AND OVER! THAT CAR WILL BRING DEATH TO WHOMEVER OWNS IT!

IT'S JUST COINCIDENTAL! MAYBE THE DRIVERS WERE NO GOOD! YOU CAN'T SCARE US, MISTER! WE STILL WANT TO BUY IT!

AND SO THEY BOUGHT IT...

THERE IT IS! OUR LUCKY NO. 7

IT'S GOING TO BE OUR LUCKY *CAR* TOO, NORM! I FEEL LIKE I COULD DRIVE THAT BABY FROM HERE TO CHINA WITHOUT TROUBLE!

IT ISN'T CHINA I'M WORRIED ABOUT, DARLING! BUT THE BIG RACE AT DENVER NEXT MONTH! I'M AFRAID, JACK!

DON'T BE! I'LL ROAR ACROSS THAT FINISH LINE FIFTY YARDS AHEAD OF ANYONE ELSE!

DURING THE FOLLOWING MONTH, JACK AND NORM TRAINED AND TESTED THE CAR THOROUGHLY...

THE ENGINE IS IN PERFECT SHAPE, JACK!

GOOD, NORM! LET'S SEE WHAT THIS BABY WILL DO AROUND THE TRACK!

HE DID IT AT 9:31, NORM!

YIPEEE! AT THAT SPEED, WE'RE A CINCH TO WIN THE DENVER RACE!

TWO WEEKS LATER, AT THE TRACK IN DENVER...

GOOD LUCK, DARLING! I KNOW YOU'LL WIN!

TAKE IT EASY, JACK! DON'T RUN ANY RISKS! WITH THIS CAR, YOU CAN JUST BREEZE ALONG!

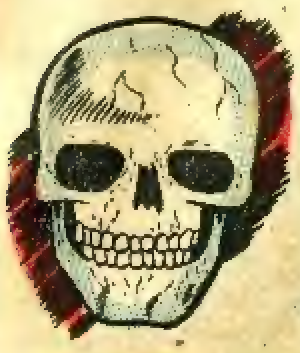
MINUTES LATER, JACK WAS WHIRLING AROUND THE TRACK...

THE OTHER GUYS WHO DROVE THIS CAR MUST HAVE BEEN IDIOTS! IT HANDLES LIKE A DREAM! "CAR OF DEATH". HA HA!

AS THE CARS WENT INTO THE LAST LAP OF THE RACE, JACK HAD A BIG LEAD! AS HE ROUNDED THE TURN NEAR SHELIA

LOOK AT HIM, NORM! HE'S FLYING!

BUT SUDDENLY, BEFORE THE DISBELIEVING AND HORRIFIED EYES OF THE CROWD, NO. 7 CHARGED STRAIGHT TOWARD IT'S OWN MECHANIC'S PIT...



T-THE WHEEL'S LOCKED! I CAN'T TURN IT! SHELIA, GET OUT OF...

AN INSTANT LATER...

AGHRRRR!

THE RAMPANT CAR WAS FINALLY STOPPED AS IT CAREENED WILDLY INTO A TRUCK...

SMASHHH!

OH, NO! NO!

THE DEATH TOLL WAS TWO!

I'M SORRY, MR. NOLAN... *THEY'RE BOTH DEAD!*

D-DEAR LORD...I- IT CAN'T BE... JACK AND SHELIA... DEAD!

AMBULANCE

NORM HAD JACK AND SHELIA BURIED SIDE-BY-SIDE...

JACK LEWIS BORN 3-12-26 DIED 4-19-51 REST IN PEACE

SHELIA NOLAN BORN 12-2-28 DIED 4-19-51 REST IN PEACE

FOLLOWING THE DEATHS OF JACK AND SHELIA, NORM FACED THE FUTURE WITH JUST ONE THOUGHT...

I-I'VE GOT TO DO IT! I'VE GOT TO RACE THIS CAR! I DON'T BELIEVE WHAT THE OLD MAN SAID...AND I'LL PROVE HE WAS WRONG!

NORM TOOK THE LITTLE MONEY HE HAD AND SET ABOUT REBUILDING THE SHATTERED CAR...

AND WHEN NORM WAS FINISHED, HE ENTERED NO. 7 IN THE CLOSING DAY RACE AT THE DENVER MEET...

NOLAN, YOU MUST BE CRAZY! I'VE HEARD ABOUT THE RECORD OF YOUR CAR! I WOULDN'T DRIVE IT FOR A MILLION BUCKS!

NOBODY'S ASKING YOU TO DRIVE IT, KELLY! I'M DRIVING IT AND I'M GOING TO WIN!

ENTRIES FOR FINAL MEET

ON THE EVE OF THE RACE, NORM WENT TO THE CEMETERY! SOMETHING COMPELLED HIM TO VISIT THE DEAD JACK AND SHELIA...

IF ONLY JACK HADN'T LOST CONTROL OF THE CAR, HE AND SHELIA WOULD BE ALIVE NOW! HOW COULD HE HAVE MADE SUCH A HIDEOUS MISTAKE?

BUT AS NORM TURNED TO LEAVE...

I DIDN'T MAKE A MISTAKE, NORM! *NOBODY* CAN DRIVE THAT CAR!

WHAT?

IT WAS UNBELIEVEABLE BUT THE DEAD FRIENDS SPOKE..

J-JACK, SHELIA! B-BUT IT CAN'T BE! YOU'RE DEAD... DEAD!

I-I MUST BE LOSING MY MIND! IT CAN'T...

DON'T BE FRIGHTENED, NORM! WE'RE HERE TO HELP YOU!

NORM FELT LIKE HE WAS IN THE MIDDLE OF A DREAM... HE COULDN'T BELIEVE HIS EYES AND EARS...

YOU CAN'T RACE THAT CAR, NORM! THERE'S SOMETHING UNEARTHLY ABOUT IT! IT SHOULD BE DESTROYED! IF YOU DRIVE IT, YOU'LL *DIE!*

PLEASE, NORM, YOU'VE GOT TO LISTEN TO US! DON'T DRIVE NO. 7!

SUDDENLY HE COULD STAND IT NO LONGER AND NORM FLED FROM THE CEMETERY...

I-I'VE GOT TO GET OUT OF HERE... I MUST BE GOING CRAZY! SHELIA AND JACK ARE DEAD AND DEAD BODIES DON'T TALK!

NORM TOSSED RESTLESSLY IN HIS SLEEP THAT NIGHT... HE WAS HAUNTED BY HIS FEARS AND MEMORIES...

YOU'LL *DIE* IF YOU DRIVE THAT CAR!

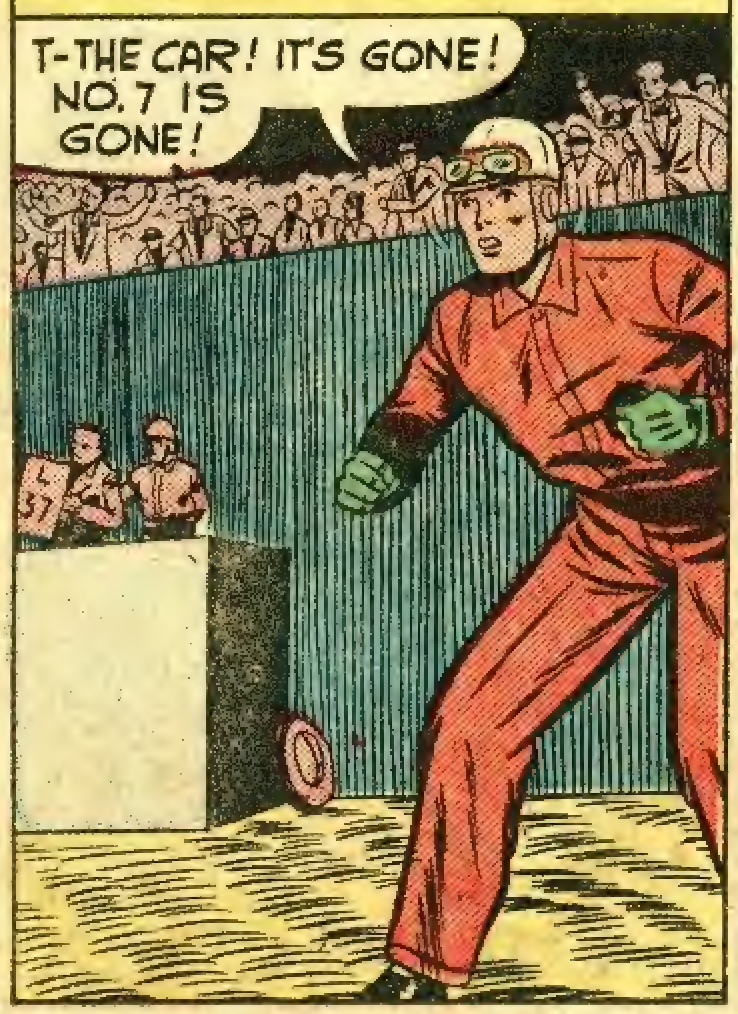
AGHRRR!

THAT CAR CAUSES *DEATH!*

FRIGHTENED THOUGH HE WAS, WHEN HE AWAKENED ON THE DAY OF THE RACE, NORM WAS DETERMINED TO RACE NO.7

AS NORM HASTILY GRABBED THE SPARE PART, HE HEARD THE CROWD ROAR AS THE CARS ENTERED THE FIELD...

A MINUTE LATER, AS NORM RUSHED BACK INTO THE PIT...



AS HE LOOKED UP AND ONTO THE TRACK, HE SAW A SIGHT THAT MADE HIS BLOOD RUN COLD...

THERE WAS NOTHING THE STUNNED NORM COULD DO BUT WAIT AND WATCH...

LOOK AT IT GO! WHOEVER'S AT THE WHEEL SURE KNOWS HOW TO DRIVE!

AS THE CARS APPROACHED THE LAST LAP OF THE RACE, IT WAS OBVIOUS THAT NO. 7 WAS TO BE THE VICTOR... THE CROWD CHEERED WILDLY...

NO. 7 CROSSED THE LINE FIFTY YARDS AHEAD OF THE OTHER CARS, BUT INSTEAD OF STOPPING, IT KEPT RIGHT ON GOING...

THE WINNER IS NO. 7! IT WAS A MAGNIFICENT RACE, FOLKS! FROM THE... *HEY, WAIT A MINUTE! NO. 7 IS IN TROUBLE! IT'S OUT OF CONTROL!*

NO. 7 CRASHED INTO THE CONCRETE WALL SURROUNDING THE FIELD AT 98 MILES PER HOURS...

SMASH!

AND AN INSTANT LATER IT WAS A BURNING INFERNO...

OUT OF THE WAY EVERYBODY! MAKE ROOM SO WE CAN GET THE DRIVER OUT!

I-IT COULD HAVE BEEN ME DRIVING... IT COULD HAVE BEEN ME!

BUT WHEN THE FIRE WAS UNDER CONTROL AND THE WRECK COULD BE EXAMINED... *NO BODY WAS FOUND!* THERE WAS NO SIGN OF *WHO* THE DRIVER HAD BEEN!

NOLAN! IT'S A MIRACLE! WHEN THEY DIDN'T FIND YOUR BODY, WE KNEW YOU MUST HAVE ESCAPED, HOW'D YOU DO IT, MAN?

I...I WASN'T DRIVING THAT CAR! I...I DON'T KNOW WHO WAS!

THE TRACK OFFICIALS THOUGHT NORM WAS CRAZED BY HIS ESCAPE FROM DEATH! THEN NORM HIT UPON AN IDEA...

TELL ME, WHERE ARE THE PICTURES THAT WERE TAKEN AT THE FINISH LINE?

THEY'RE BEING DEVELOPED IN THE DARK ROOM!

A MINUTE LATER IN THE DARK ROOM, ON THE PICTURE HE SAW THE DRIVER OF THE CAR WAS THE DEAD JACK...

H...HE SAVED MY LIFE...HE WOULDN'T LET ME DRIVE NO. 7!

SLOWLY NORM TORE THE PICTURE! BUT HE KNEW...THE DRIVER OF NO. 7 WAS *DEATH!*

The End

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THE HORROR OF THE HAUNTED CASTLE

By ELLEN LYNN

WITCHES, ghosts, haunted castles! Do they belong only to ages long past. Are they only tales told by tellers of fairy tales To Alice Martin such things were nonsense. She said she couldn't believe in them.

Alice was a typical, fun-loving, American college girl—and besides, she was studying sciences. A scientist knows that every phenomenon, no matter how strange, has its own physical cause and effect. Eerie creatures, apparitions arise from the frightened minds of superstitious people. Science clears away the mists and fog surrounding weird beliefs. So Alice, with her pretty face and charming figure, was quite sure of herself and could venture where most people might tread cautiously. That is until Grinling Castle came into her life.

A group of exceptional students of science were going abroad to spend a year studying at an ancient University near Paris. Alice was elated when she was chosen to join the group and she won the permission of her indulgent parents to accompany the selected party under the supervision of two of the instructors. They were a gay and happy group as they set sail for Europe.

In ancient Europe, Alice found studying most stimulating. In addition, she was very popular with all the male students, French, Italian, German, English. Hans Karel, a young assistant instructor was particularly smitten wtih her and she had had a few dates with him. He was not unattractive with his blond hair and teutonic stiffness. But there was something—she couldn't quite put her finger on it—that made her feel not quite comfortable with him. Perhaps it was his eyes: they were steel blue, cold and penetrating. She felt that his eyes saw through her and knew—knew—that it was Professor Loring, head professor in mythology, that she couldn't dismiss from her real thoughts, and her heart.

Prof. Loring had requested her to assist him with the manuscript of his book on the Origins and Causes of Legends and Superstitions. She had felt not only proud and honored by his selection of her—but her heart fluttered strangely when his deep, brown eyes looked into hers, and, taking his pipe from his mouth, he asked, "Miss Martin, would you care to spend some of your evening hours assisting me with my manuscript?" Hans Karel, the science instructor, was standing nearby at the time, and she noticed how strained he was as he listened to them.

"It would be an honor," she had answered. "I'm on the edge of a great discovery in the supernatural but I need a live assistant to scare the ghosts." They both laughed. He was quite young for a professor and very handsome. And then she had noticed again how hostile Hans had looked, his lips drawn into a thin line and his eyes shooting cold sparks. Suddenly she wished she could break her date with him for that evening. He was such an intense young man. Well, she'd keep it this time—but no more dates after that with Hans Karel.

It was wonderful working with Matthew Loring; but he had been right—it was hard work searching old tomes for proofs of ancient ghosts and like phenomena. "Alice," he once said, "I'll have to give you credit when my book goes into publication. Rather, I should say, it will be a pleasure to give you credit." They were standing close together and she looked into his eyes, flushing at his words. Suddenly, he took hold of her hands, then drew her to him and kissed her lips. A cough broke the silence. They had not heard Hans come into the room. The professor calmly released Alice, said, "I'll be back in a little while, dear. I'm going to my office now." And he left the room. Alice turned to Hans. He was glaring at her and his face was scarlet.

"So," he spluttered, "It's 'dear', is it? And sneaking kisses instead of working. So that's why he picked you to assist him? He makes believe his only interest is ghosts and then he steals my full of life girl."

"*Your girl!*" Alice exclaimed in astonishment. "Why, Hans, what right have you to make such a claim? And as for the kisses—I'll have you know this is the first time he ever kissed me, and he did so because I wanted him to. I'm in love with him."

"Bah! He loves only ghosts. That's where he should be—with them. The fool, believing in such silly things."

For the first time in her memory, Alice felt a sense of fear as she watched Hans's reaction to her words. From bright red, his face turned pale as ivory. His breath came in short spasms and his fingers were clenching and unclenching rapidly.

When the book was nearing completion, Alice became thoroughly fascinated with the mounting proofs of those who had returned from the graves to haunt the land of the living. But now she and Professor Loring realized they needed personal proof to complete their manuscript and crown it with real success. They believed that the old forbidding and forbidden ghostly Grinling Castle would give the proof they needed.

Then one day the Professor barged in with an open letter in his hand. In a voice filled with elation he said, "Alice, at last I've got permission to visit the Grinling Castle. At last I've gotten through the taboos and red tape. I truly believe that even the government officials believe that the castle is haunted, and know that ghosts must

inhabit those musty, decayed walls. They warned me not to go—but finally granted permission. Then will my manuscript be complete."

Alice rejoiced with the professor. Then he turned and grasped both her arms. "My only regret is it is so dangerous that I have to leave you behind, Alice—just when I've found you—fallen in love with you." Happily, Alice returned his kiss as the thought of the strange Hans flitted through her mind when she heard, "and Karel has offered to come along to confirm my findings."

Matthew Loring and Hans Karel departed the next morning for the distant Grinling Castle. Hans sat grimly at the wheel as Matthew chatted gaily about his anticipation of their findings.

"I know, Hans, we can arouse at least one of the famous ghosts of the castle. A personal encounter would show our disbelieving world that the dead do come back at the right time and place.

Hans stared straight ahead as he spoke, "You're in an unusual mood, professor. One would almost think you're in love."

"You've guessed it, Hans," was the quick reply. "I'm sure you know I'm in love with Alice Martin, my pretty little American assistant. When my manuscript is complete, after Grinling, we will marry."

The car shot ahead at a sudden increase of speed. Prof. Loring turned to stare at the man at the wheel. Hans' face was ashen grey and he leaned forward as he stepped on the accelerator. The needle pointed to 80!

The two men remained silent the rest of the trip. When they reached the castle grounds a heavy mist had settled over the thick trees and wild hedges. The grounds had not been tended for many years and a thick maze of branches and vines made it difficult to penetrate to the building. But they finally got through and Prof. Loring started to jot down notes as he mounted the cracked and crumbling steps of the house.

Inside, from the high-vaulted ceiling hung draperies of cobwebs, and huge flying creatures darted about in the dim light. Suddenly a long, thin, scream assailed their ears.

Prof. Loring turned to Hans and whispered, "Hans, I know it. That was the voice of a ghost! The Grinling ghost, Europe's most famous ghost."

"Not quite, Loring," Hans answered. "My reason still tells me it was the sound of the wind through the cracks. And that's how ghost stories arise—from just such sounds in a ruined building."

As the Professor answered, a wild thought darted through Hans's burning mind. Here was his chance for revenge—and for Alice Martin. Yes, he would do it—and have a wonderful alibi to cover himself! That balcony running around two walls, high up toward the ceiling, and the rickety railing . . . ! Hans quickly mounted the steps and called to Loring down below. "Come up, Professor, look recent shadowy foot prints—without weight—inhuman." Eagerly, Loring took the steps two at a time. "Yes, where are they?" he asked Hans. "There, look down there." said Hans. Surprised, Loring leaned over and Hans carried out his plan; with two hands he pushed hard—and Loring crashed through the rotting rail, his body somersaulting in air as he gave one awful scream. It landed with a loud thud on the stone floor below and a cloud of dust mounted high, high up to the gloating face of Hans.

"Now, Professor, you can be a ghost along with the rest of the company here. Perhaps you can let us know from the next world all about ghosts and such. Maybe there you can finish your foolish manuscript. Then Hans left the castle feeling like a conqueror.

Everyone was shocked at the terrible accident that had befallen the popular Prof. Loring. Alice couldn't believe that he was dead. "But Hans," she asked over and over again, "Surely he knew the railing was rotted. Why did he lean against it at such a height? What was he looking for?"

For months Hans tried to win Alice's interest, but she could not get over the tragic event, and she avoided him. Every night she dreamed of Professor Loring—Matthew—and his unfinished manuscript and imagined him falling, falling, over the creaking railing of the balcony at Grinling Castle. Then, one night, in a dream, the dead Loring came back, he spoke to her: "Alice—beloved—make Hans go back to the Castle, and have him bring my unfinished manuscript Hurry, hurry! Now it can be finished—now I know!" She woke with a start from this vivid dream. Three nights in a row the same thing occurred. The fourth day, Hans phoned her and she told him to come to see her. She decided to obey the instructions of her dream—Matthew's voice was so clear to her.

"Hans," she said, "I want to visit Grinling Castle. Will you meet me there? After I see the place of his death I will be able to forget him. Please take his unfinished manuscript with you. Let us leave it there. Please, for my sake."

"I am not permitted to take you there, Alice, but if you wish it I shall go to the castle and leave the manuscript there. Would that please you?" Hans offered quickly.

Alice felt that would fulfill the orders of her dream. The next day Hans left with the manuscript in his brief case. He said he would return the following day.

A week later, Hans had not returned. Alarmed, Alice notified the police. She accompanied them to the famous old haunted Castle. They found the remains of a new body—Hans, apparently dead six days. On the ground were the scattered pages of the unfinished manuscript. The police permitted Alice to pick them up. To her amazement, there were additional pages—a new chapter written in Matthew's handwriting. But she knew no one would believe her. The manuscript had been finished! And the last paragraph read:

"Yes people have avenging ghosts after all Hans hurled me to my death, but I couldn't die till I was avenged. It was my own ghost that really brought him back to the castle and made him jump from the balcony, from which he hurled me. Now the world can know the truth."

THE GHOULS DANCE

THE STRANGE PLACES OF THE WORLD ARE STEEPED IN MYSTERY. NATIVES SHUDDER AS THOUGH IN FEAR WHEN THE WHITE MAN COMES. THE MATTED VINES, ROTTING TREES, SLIMY GRASSES OF THE JUNGLES DRAW CLOSE AS THOUGH TO BLOCK FROM THEIR TERRIFIED GAZE, CIVILAZATION AS IT APPROACHES -- FOR THEN...

WHERE DID THEY COME FROM? THERE WERE NO NATIVES WITHIN MILES WHEN WE MADE OUR SURVEY BY HELICOPTER!

UGH! THEY'RE HORRIBLE... THEY'RE GOING TO ATTACK US!

THAT FLAME THEY'RE DANCING AROUND -- IT'S NOT HOT -- BUT COLD... WHAT CAN BE ITS SECRET?

Robert Cohen

IT IS EARLY MORNING AT THE OFFICE OF THE GEODETIC SURVEY SERVICE IN WASHINGTON...

ROBERT HARING HAS DISAPPEARED IN THE INCA LAND! WE FEAR THE CANNIBALS HAVE GOTTEN HIM! YOU MUST FIND HIM OR HIS REMAINS!

CANNIBALISM IN CENTRAL AMERICA... BOSH!

WE'LL FIND HIM, CHIEF, WON'T WE, DIRK?

A FEW WEEKS LATER, RUTH, DIRK AND TODD ARRIVED IN CENTRAL AMERICA...

AT LAST, THEY'RE HERE - THE SECOND INVESTIGATION TEAM! NOW WE'LL SETTEE THE RUMORS OF CANNIBALISM AND THE DISSAPPEARANCE OF ROBERT HARING!

SI, SEÑOR CONSUL -- MUY BUENO...

WELCOME TO LOS ALAMOSA...

A WOMAN / ARE THEY OUT OF THEIR MINDS?

HELLO, WE'RE THE TEAM YOU SENT FOR TO FIND HARING /

I'M THE AMERICAN CONSUL / WE'VE BEEN ANXIOUSLY AWAITING YOU-- THERE IS INCREASING EVIDENCE OF CANNIBALISM IN THE LOCALITY /

YES, WE KNOW / BUT WHAT WE REALLY WANT TO FIND OUT ABOUT IS WHAT HAPPENED TO HARING /

I...WE... DON'T KNOW / HARING WAS HERE A DAY AND THEN PUSHED INTO THE INTERIOR / HE WAS NEVER HEARD FROM AGAIN /

THAT'S IMPOSSIBLE ...THERE MUST BE SOME TRACE OF...

HELP / COME QUICKLY / WE'VE FOUND ANOTHER ONE /

THE PUZZLED GROUP HURRIED AWAY AFTER THE TERRIFIED NATIVE. IN A MATTER OF MINUTES...

SEE / THE MARKS -- THE MARKS OF HUMAN TEETH /

OHH- HOW GHASTLY /

WELL, GENTLEMEN --NOW WILL YOU BELIEVE ME?

INCREDIBLE / HERE IS A DEFINITE FORM OF CANNIBALISM-- A TYPE NOT KNOWN SINCE THE STONE AGES /

THE GROUP RETURNED TO THE VILLAGE-- OBVIOUSLY THERE WAS NOTHING THAT COULD BE DONE FOR THE MANGLED NATIVE...

AS YOU CAN SEE, WE BADLY NEED YOUR HELP, CAPTAIN / BUT THE WOMAN-- WHY IS SHE HERE?

RUTH-- SHE'S A NURSE / WE MAY NEED HER IF WE FIND HARING /

PLANS WERE MADE THAT NIGHT. EARLY THE NEXT MORNING THE RESCUE GROUP WITH THE LOCAL BEARERS HEADED BACK INTO THE JUNGLE -- THEIR PRIMARY MISSION - TO DISCOVER THE MISSING HARING, THEIR SECONDARY -- TO FIND OUT ABOUT THE CANNIBALISM IN THE COUNTRY!

ALL I'VE LEARNED IS THAT HARING WENT SOUTH TO THE INCA LAND!

OH, DRAT! WHY DIDN'T WE COME IN THE HELICOPTER?

THEN WE COULDN'T REALLY EXPLORE THE COUNTRY! BESIDES -- IT WOULD LET EVERYONE KNOW WE WERE COMING FOR MILES AROUND!

WEARY MILE FOLLOWED WEARY MILE. SUDDENLY, RISING UP MAJECTICALLY FROM THE JUNGLE IN THE CLOUDS THAT SUDDENLY OPENED... THEY SAW AN ANCIENT TEMPLE...

NO WONDER NO ONE KNOWS ANYTHING ABOUT THIS AREA... IT'S ALWAYS HIDDEN BY CLOUDS!

ANYTHING COULD BE IN THAT TEMPLE! WE'LL HAVE TO FIND A WAY UP!

THEN - LATE THAT AFTERNOON...

OVER HERE! LOOK! A TRAIL TO THE TOP!

OHH -- THESE CARVINGS ARE HORRIBLE -- LOOK -- THEY SHOW STRANGE STONE FIGURES OF ANCIENT CANNIBALS!

DON'T LOOK -- THEY'RE TOO GHASTLY!

SUDDENLY THE BEARERS DROPPED THEIR PACKS AND RAN OFF...

NO... STOP... COME BACK!

STAY HERE YOU COWARDLY BEGGARS!

WE GO! THIS IS A PLACE OF EVIL... THE EVIL OF THE DANCING GHOULS!

DESPITE THE DESERTION OF THEIR PORTERS THE EXPEDITION PUSHED ON...

WE'RE AT THE TOP! THERE'S THE TEMPLE AT LAST!

YES, THE GROUP HAD DISCOVERED A VERITABLE TREASURE HOUSE OF PRE-INCA RUINS...

WE'RE THE FIRST TO WALK THIS SQUARE IN MANY CENTURIES!

ARE WE? DON'T BE SO SURE OF THAT!

FABULOUS!

HERE, LOOK HERE! FRESH SMEARS OF BLOOD!

HATE TO SAY I TOLD YOU SO -- SOMEONE OR SOMETHING ELSE IS UP HERE... HARING MAYBE!

WATCH IT, YOU TWO -- THIS MAY BE THE END OF OUR SEARCH!

SUDDENLY AN ANCIENT PRIEST APPEARED...

WELCOME, STRANGERS, WELCOME!

I AM ZYKAR -- LAST PRIEST OF THIS TEMPLE! I BID THEE WELCOME IF YOU SEEK KNOWLEDGE OF MY LOST PEOPLE... BUT YOU WILL NOT FIND HARING!

THE GROUP STOOD STUNNED AS THIS LIVING FOSSIL SPOKE TO THEM ABOUT HARING...

HE MUST HAVE READ OUR MINDS!

HOW DOES HE KNOW ABOUT OUR SEEKING HARING?

I... I'M AFRAID!

FORGET IT! THIS OLD COOT'S OFF HIS ROCKER... LET'S HUMOR HIM!

ONLY THOSE WHO COME WITHOUT EVIL IN THEIR HEARTS OR MINDS ARE WELCOME HERE!

LOOK! STATUES!

NO, RUTH... MUMMIES!

I SAY WE OUGHTA QUIT FOOLING AROUND AND MAKE HIM TELL US ABOUT HARING!

STATUES? MUMMIES? THESE ARE THE SACRED PRIESTS OF THIS TEMPLE! THROUGH THE CENTURIES THEY HAVE **BROODED** AND **WAITED** AND **GUARDED** THE FLAME! BEWARE! GUARD YOUR TONGUE!

LOOK! A TOWER OF FIRE! BUT THERE'S NO HEAT! WISH WE COULD FIND OUT WHAT ITS SOURCE IS!

OUR SACRED FLAME-- ONCE, SACRIFICES OF ENEMIES WERE MADE TO IT! NOW- IT GROWS DIM FOR **LACK OF FOOD**! YOU WILL NOT MOLEST THE FLAME-- PROMISE ME!

WE WILL NOT MOLEST THE FLAME!

I'LL BET ITS SECRET COULD BE WORTH A FORTUNE!

THE PRIEST GUARDED HIS FLAME CLOSELY, WARNING THEM AWAY. A FEW DAYS PASSED, AND HARING WAS NOT FOUND...

YOU HAVE EXPLORED AND STUDIED! BUT THE FLAME SAYS YOU SHOULD GO, NOW!

AFRAID, THEY LEFT THAT NIGHT AND MADE CAMP IN THE SQUARE OUTSIDE THE TEMPLE...

IT'S LIKE A JIGSAW PUZZLE TO A BLIND MAN! HE KNOWS ABOUT HARING, BUT HARING ISN'T HERE! LET'S GO ON!

THAT FLAME WITH NO HEAT! I'VE GOT TO GET TO IT, TRY AND STEAL IT BEFORE WE LEAVE!

LATER THAT NIGHT, IGNORING THE PRIEST'S WARNING, TODD RETURNED TO THE TEMPLE AS SOON AS THE OTHERS WERE ASLEEP...

I'M NOT AFRAID! I'LL FIND OUT WHAT CAUSES THAT FLAME!

ALL IS SILENCE! NOW- I'LL SEE WHAT MAKES THAT INFERNAL FOUNTAIN TICK!

MUCH AS I THOUGHT! THE FLAME COMES FROM A SMALL ORNATELY COVERED BOX AT THE BASE OF THE FOUNTAIN!

RADIUM - IT'S WORTH A FORTUNE -- I'LL STEAL IT!

STOP! STOP! RASH FOOL -- YOU KNOW NOT WHAT YOU DO!

DOG! YOU MUST DIE FOR YOUR SACRILIDGE ... LIKE HARING DID!

HEY! GRAMPAW! TAKE IT EASY! I DON'T WANT TO DO EITHER!

OKAY! YOU ASKED FOR IT!

I'VE KILLED A MAN! BUT -- IT'S WORTH IT! NOW I MUST GET RID OF THE BODY!

THERE! IT'S DONE! THE FORTUNE IN RADIUM IS MINE -- ALL MINE!

AT THAT SECOND, A DRUM STARTED UP IN THE DISTANCE -- FIRST THE DRUM AND THEN THERE CAME THE SOUND OF MANY MASSED DANCING FEET...

THOSE STATUES HAVE COME ALIVE - THEY ARE DANCING! GOT TO GET DIRK'S HELP!

YES, THE STATUES HAD COME ALIVE! AND WITH THEM WAS THE DEAD PRIEST--TODD COULD NOT ESCAPE...

NO, YOU'RE THE PRIEST I KILLED! YOU CAN'T BE ALIVE!

I WARNED YOU!

AND YOU-- YOU'RE HARING!

YES I AM, OR, WAS HARING! YOU SEE I TRIED TO STEAL THE FLAME TOO AND I'VE BEEN TURNED TO STONE LIKE THE OTHERS!

TODD TRIED TO RUN, BUT HE WAS TAKEN AND THROWN INTO THE ETERNAL FLAME AS FUEL UNTIL THE BOX WAS RETURNED!

NO! NO! EEEYAH!

THEN THE CANNIBALS HAD THEIR WAY WITH TODD AS CANNIBALS WILL. WHEN THEY WERE THROUGH THEY MUMMIFIED HIS SKELETON INTO A FIGURE OF STONE AND PLACED HIM AMONG THEM...

MEANWHILE, BACK AT CAMP, TODD WAS MISSED...

DIRK! TODD'S GONE!

WE MUST GO BACK TO LOOK FOR HIM!

THEY NEVER FOUND TODD, BUT THEY DID FIND...

LOOK, THREE NEW FIGURES! THIS LOOKS LIKE THE PRIEST AND THIS- LIKE- LIKE TODD... AND THIS LIKE ANOTHER AMERICAN, MAYBE... HARING!

IT CAN'T BE! NO ONE WILL BELIEVE THIS!

THE END

MEDUSA

WHEN JEFF LOUNDES WAS A CHILD, HE'D BEEN BITTEN BY A SNAKE... A RATTLER... AND NEARLY DIED! PERHAPS THAT'S WHAT MADE HIM THE AVOWED ENEMY OF ALL SNAKES! THEY FASCINATED AND REPELLED HIM! HE TOOK AN UNHOLY PLEASURE IN KILLING THEM... UNTIL HIS OBSESSION SWEPT HIM INTO A NIGHTMARE OF UNIMAGINED HORROR!

JEFF... JEFF DARLING... LET ME HOLD YOU IN MY ARMS! WHY ARE YOU SO AFRAID?

NO, NO, NO!... STAY AWAY... DON'T TOUCH ME! YOUR HAIR HAS TURNED INTO-- SNAKES!

Hy Fleishman

IT WAS A GLARING HOT MID-SUMMER DAY WHEN JEFF LOUNDES NEIGHBORS FOUND A NEST OF RATTLERS IN THEIR RANCH YARD!

MOM! MOM! THERE'S A NEST OF RATTLERS OVER BY THE WELL!

COME INSIDE, HARVEY! I'LL CALL JEFF LOUNDES!

HARVEY SAYS THERES A NEST OF THEM! JOE'S IN TOWN, SO THERE'S NO MENFOLK AROUND!

I'LL BE RIGHT OVER TO CLEAN THE VARMINTS OUT!

THEY'RE OVER BY THE WELL, JEFF! GOLLY, CAN I WATCH YOU SHOOT 'EM UP!

YOU STAY ON THE PORCH!

THEY CAN'T SCARE ME... THE EVIL, SLIMY THINGS... I HATE 'EM! DIE! GO ON, DIE!

DON'T KILL THE PITDOWN. IT'LL BRING YOU EVIL! DON'T YOU KNOW SOME PEOPLE WORSHIP THEM?

BANG BANG BLAM

A STRANGE OLD WOMAN SUDDENLY APPEARED...

I GOT 'EM ALL...ESPECIALLY THIS PITDOWN! MIND IF I TAKE THEM HOME AND SKIN 'EM? BUT WHO WAS THAT OLD WOMAN?

FOR LANDS SAKE, NO! GOOD RIDDANCE! I DIDN'T SEE ANY OLD WOMAN!

METHODICALLY JEFF SKINNED THE SNAKES AND STRETCHED THE SKINS! HE WAS AN EXPERT AT THIS KIND OF WORK WITH ONE OF THE BIGGEST COLLECTIONS OF SKINS IN THE COUNTRY!

THERE! PRETTY SOON I'M GOING TO NEED ANOTHER TROPHY ROOM... GOT THE WALLS NEARLY COVERED!

THE NEXT DAY, WHILE JEFF WAS DRIVING TO TOWN...

HEY, WHAT'S THE EXCITEMENT UP AHEAD!

CIRCUS IN TOWN... THEY'RE PARADING DOWN THE MAIN STREET!

A CIRCUS! I HAVEN'T BEEN TO ONE SINCE I WAS A KID! SOUNDS LIKE IT MIGHT BE FUN!

AND SO AS EVENING FELL OVER THE SMALL WESTERN TOWN, JEFF LOUNDES JOINED THE OTHER TOWNSPEOPLE WHO THRONGED TO THE CIRCUS GROUNDS!

STEP RIGHT UP, LADIES AND GENTLEMEN... HERE IN THIS TENT ARE THE MOST ASTOUNDING, AMAZING, UNUSUAL FREAKS IN THE WORLD...THE FAT LADY, THE THIN MAN... AND ELFREDA, THE SNAKE CHARMER! COME OUT, ELFREDA...AND BRING ONE OF YOUR LITTLE PETS!

THE SIGHT OF ELFREDA STROKING THE THICK BLACK COILS OF THE SNAKE FILLED JEFF WITH A STRANGE ATTRACTION SO GREAT THAT HE COULD FEEL THE SWEAT BREAK OUT ON HIS UPPER LIP!

UGH, HOW CAN SHE HOLD THAT WRITHING, SLIMY SERPENT AND NOT BE SICK WITH FEAR?

ELFREDA'S EYES LAZILY RAN OVER THE CROWD UNTIL THEY FELL ON JEFF! THERE WAS A MOCKING, CHALLENGING SMILE IN HER EYES... AS IF SHE KNEW HIS SECRET... HIS FEAR OF SNAKES!

COME ON IN FOLKS... DON'T MISS THIS CHANCE OF A LIFETIME! THE GREATEST SHOW EVER ASSEMBLED...

SOME POWERFUL COMPULSION MOVED JEFF... HE HAD TO SEE ELFREDA AND THE SNAKE AGAIN! THERE WAS SOME HORRIBLE FASCINATION ABOUT THE WAY SHE CARESSED THE LOATHESOME THING!

WHY WOULD A BEAUTIFUL GIRL LIKE THAT PICK SUCH A HORRIBLE JOB?

COME, BORIS... HOW CLEVER YOU ARE!... CLIMB UP MY ARM... AROUND MY NECK...

SHE TALKS TO THEM!... AS IF SHE LOVES THEM! IT'S HORRIBLE!

YOU LIKE SNAKES?

NO! I HATE THEM! I KILL THEM! I KILL EVERY ONE I CAN FIND! HOW CAN YOU STAND HANDLING THEM THE WAY YOU DO?

THERE WAS A PERSONAL MAGNETISM ABOUT HER THAT ATTRACTED JEFF TO ELFREDA AS NO WOMAN BEFORE HAD EVER DONE!

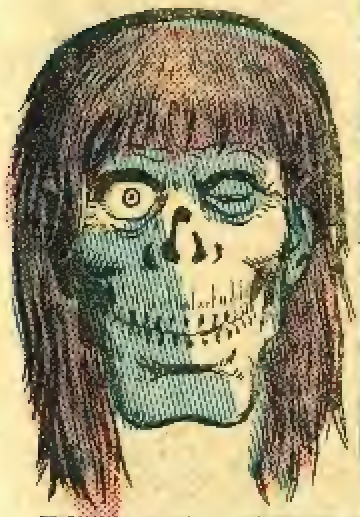
LET'S FORGET ABOUT THE SNAKES! I DIDN'T STAND HERE TO ADMIRE THEM! IT WAS YOU I WAS WATCHING! AFTER THE SHOW... COULD I MEET YOU SOMEPLACE?

WHY, YES... THAT WOULD BE NICE! OUTSIDE THE BIG TENT WHEN THE SHOW CLOSES!

I MUST BE CRAZY... MAKING A DATE WITH A SNAKE CHARMER!

HERE I AM! DID I KEEP YOU WAITING LONG?

BEFORE THE EVENING WAS OVER, ELFREDA'S BEAUTY AND SULTRY DARK EYES COMPLETELY CAPTIVATED JEFF! HE FELT THAT HE COULD NOT LIVE WITHOUT HER!



ELFREDA, I KNOW IT SOUNDS CRAZY... BUT I LOVE YOU! LOVE YOU AND WANT TO BE NEAR YOU ALWAYS!

IT IS MADNESS, JEFF! WE JUST MET TONIGHT!

THAT WEEK JEFF MET HER NIGHTLY! HIS ATTRACTION GREW, AND ONE NIGHT...

MARRY ME, DEAR! I WANT YOU! LEAVE THIS MISERABLE CIRCUS NOW... TONIGHT! THE JUSTICE OF THE PEACE IS A FRIEND OF MINE! HE'LL MARRY US! *PLEASE!*

YES, JEFF, YES... IF YOU WANT ME SO MUCH! LET ME GET MY THINGS!

HERE! LET ME HELP! WHY DIDN'T YOU CALL ME? WHATEVER HAVE YOU GOT THERE?

MY PETS!

YOUR PETS! YOU MEAN YOUR SNAKES... NO! YOU CAN'T BRING THEM TO MY RANCH WITH YOU! LEAVE THEM HERE WITH THE CIRCUS...

NO... NO! NO! IF THEY CANNOT COME WITH ME, I WILL NOT LEAVE!

I MUST HAVE HER! I CAN'T LIVE WITHOUT HER! LET HER TAKE THE EVIL THINGS! I'LL FIND A WAY TO GET RID OF THEM LATER!

ALL RIGHT! YOU WIN! I'LL LOAD THEM IN THE CAR!

EVEN THOUGH IT WAS LATE, JEFF'S FRIEND, THE JUSTICE OF THE PEACE, MARRIED THEM AND THEY DROVE BACK TO THE RANCH!

WAIT, JEFF! MY SNAKES! I CAN'T LEAVE THEM LOCKED UP IN THAT BOX!

WHAT! YOU MEAN I HAVE TO FIND A PLACE FOR THEM AT THIS HOUR... I KNOW... THE DRY WELL PIT!

NO WAY THEY CAN GET OUT OF THERE! JUST DON'T LET ANY OF THEM GET LOOSE EMPTYING THEM IN!

OF COURSE NOT! YOU CAN LEAVE THE LID PARTLY OPEN! THEY LIKE THE SUNSHINE IN THE DAYTIME!

DARLING...COME OVER BESIDE ME! IS IT TRUE? CAN IT REALLY BE TRUE THAT WE ARE MARRIED?

FATE MUST HAVE SENT ME INTO TOWN THAT DAY...TO MEET YOU!

YOUR HANDS...THE WAY THEY MOVE... IT IS AS IF...

KISS ME, JEFF.. KISS ME...

NO...NO... YOUR HAIR... *YOUR HAIR...*

JEFF... COME, DARLING, COME... LET ME... HOLD YOU...

YOU...WHY DID YOU DO THIS TO ME...TO THINK I TOUCHED YOU... KISSED YOU... WHO ARE YOU?

I WAS THE OLD WOMAN WHO WARNED YOU ...THEY ARE ALL MY CREATURES! YOU KILLED THEM... SLAUGHTERED THEM, NOW YOU MUST *PAY!*

AS JEFF WENT TO KISS HIS WIFE, HER HAIR, LIKE THE MEDUSA OF OLD, TURNED INTO SNAKES.

"IN MY VILLAGE PEOPLE WORSHIPPED PITDOWN SNAKES AND ME...THEY SENT ME TO KILL YOU AS YOU KILLED OUR PITDOWN SNAKE!"

I'LL KILL YOU FIRST! I'LL BLAST YOUR EVIL, VENOMOUS HEAD OFF! ...*AIEEE!* THE DOOR HANDLE!

HA HA HO HO HA HA HA

YES, I CAN MAKE ANYTHING TURN INTO A LIVE SNAKE, ESPECIALLY DEAD ONES!

FLINGING THE SNAKE IN HIS HAND ASIDE, JEFF SMASHED DOWN THE DOOR AND FLED FROM THE ROOM!

MY GUN'S IN THE TROPY ROOM! I'LL KILL HER! SHE'S A DEMON!

CRASH

GUN...MY GUN... FORGOT TO RELOAD IT! CARTRIDGE CLIP ON THE SHELF...

SLAM

THAT NOISE IS IN HERE... A RATTLE...IT'S IMPOSSIBLE...

HISS

SSS

RATTLE

RATTLE

THEY'RE DEAD... THEY CAN'T!...

JEFF'S TROPHIES HAD COME BACK TO LIFE!

NO...NO...GET BACK! GET BACK OR...

BLAM

BAM

BANG

HELP! HELP!...STAY BACK

SHE IS A DEMON! SHE BROUGHT THEM BACK TO LIFE TO KILL ME! BUT I'LL FOOL HER!

HALF CRAZED WITH FEAR, JEFF FLINGS HIMSELF OUT THE WINDOW!

CRASH

SHE WON'T GET ME! I'VE FOOLED HER! I'VE ESCAPED! I'LL GO GET HELP...

AIIEEE!

IN HIS HASTE, JEFF HAD FORGOTTEN THE PARTIALLY OPEN SNAKE PIT---AND FELL IN...

ELFREDA! PLEASE... PLEASE... HAVE MERCY! HELP ME OUT! I CAN'T HOLD ON MUCH LONGER! DON'T LET THEM KILL ME!

DON'T LET ME DIE! I'LL DO ANYTHING! *ANYTHING!* PLEASE DON'T LET ME DIE!

I WON'T LET YOU DIE, JEFF DEAR! I NEVER INTENDED THAT YOU WOULD DIE! I HAVE OTHER PLANS FOR YOU!

SLOWLY JEFF SANK INTO THE WELL AND WHILE ELFREDA WATCHED, THERE WAS NO JEFF ---ONLY A NEW SNAKE.

SAY... ISN'T THAT A NEW SNAKE YOU HAVE THERE, ELFREDA? MY, HE'S A BEAUTY!

THE SNAKE WRITHED CONVULSIVELY IN ELFREDA'S HANDS FOR A MOMENT AND THEN IT CEASED TO RESIST AND SHE SLIPPED IT AROUND HER SHOULDERS IN SLOW, STROKING GESTURES AS A SECRET SMILE FLICKERED IN HER EYES!

YES... YES, HE IS A PITDOWN! I GOT HIM LAST NIGHT! I THINK HE WILL BE VERY EASY TO HANDLE ONCE HE GETS USED TO THIS NEW WAY OF LIFE!

I CALL HIM JEFF!

HELP ME! HELP ME! I'M NOT A SNAKE! I'M JEFF LOUNDES!

BUT NO ONE COULD HEAR JEFF!

THE END

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